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ABSTRACT

This volume is part of a series, which is in turn part of a course entitled "Contact Canada" and designed for adult Francophone students of English as a second language. The series contains exercises for learning conversational tools. This volume deals specifically with response and closing formulas. In section 1, response formulas are grouped under the following categories: (1) agreement and disagreement; (2) indecision and ignorance; (3) accepting and rejecting; (4) disbelief and consensus; (5) sympathy and lack of sympathy; (6) hesitation; (7) encouragement; (8) incomprehension and cross-check; and (9) complements. In section 2, closers are grouped under casual, phone, and formal. Section 3 contains an exercise designed to call upon all the strategies the student has learned in the preceding two sections. Section 4 contains answers to exercises in the first two sections. A videotape recording explaining how to use the series effectively is available separately. (AM)

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RESPONDERS AND CLOSERS

THE THIRD OF THREE MODULES



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This series forms part of *Contact Canada*, a course for teaching English to adult Francophones in the Public Service of Canada.

A VTR demonstrating the methodology of these modules, and advice on how to use them most effectively, is available from the English Program Development and Consultation Unit. Also available is an Inventory of all the gambits in the series.

Cover: Gambits are starting manoeuvres, whether in chess or in conversation. The word gambit derives from Italian gambetto, "the act of tripping someone" (>Italian gamba "leg"). Today, the most important thing about gambits is no longer the use of trickery, but the advantage they give to their user in the game he's playing.

GAMBITS 3

CONVERSATIONAL TOOLS

by Eric Keller, Ph.D.
and Sylvia Taba Warner, M.A.

RESPONDERS and CLOSERS

THE THIRD OF THREE MODULES

PROVISIONAL VERSION

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1. RESPONDERS

Have you ever played ball alone? Boring, isn't it? It is the interaction between players that is enjoyable. Likewise in conversation. It is the interaction between speakers that is interesting.

The response you get from others usually influences what you say next. For example, if you say that government spending should be cut in half, someone can agree with you (Right on!, or You can say that again). Then the two of you can happily discuss what cuts you would make. On the other hand, if the person disagrees (What!, or That's not the way I see it) you will probably end up having to defend your statement.

You can see from this example that these short response gambits can be very powerful. They give the speaker a fair amount of control over the conversation even if he does not have a full command of English grammar and vocabulary.

There are various kinds of responders. You can indicate not only whether or not you agree with the speaker, as in the above example, but also, for instance, that you are surprised at what has just been said (Is that right?), or that you really don't know much about the subject (I don't know).

One of the most useful responders, perhaps, is the incomprehension responder. Especially if your native language is not English, you will find many uses for such gambits as, Sorry, I didn't follow you, or I didn't quite get that. You will find that most people are quite willing to repeat what they've just said or to state it a bit differently. The purpose of saying something, after all, is to be understood.

A. AGREEMENT AND DISAGREEMENT RESPONDERS

CORRECTING SOMEONE

Levels 1-4, speaking, class, 10 minutes

There are more ways than one to indicate that something is correct or incorrect when dealing with concrete, factual information. Here we have a whole series of gambits which we use to indicate whether an answer is correct or incorrect. Take turns saying what each of the signs and abbreviations below means. The person to the right of you will indicate to you whether you're right or wrong.

CORRECT:

That's right

Right

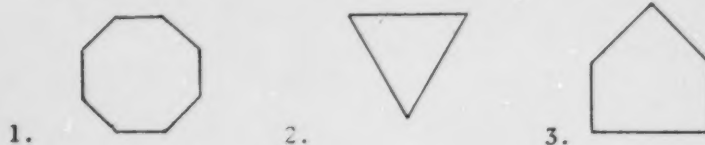
Okay

Correct

Yes

Exactly

TRAFFIC SIGNS



INCORRECT:

No, I'm afraid not

Not quite

You're close

MATHEMATICAL SIGNS

4. $\sqrt{\quad}$ 5. $\pm$ 6. $>$ 7. $\div$ 8. $\neq$ 9. $\rightarrow \infty$

ABBREVIATIONS

10. cm 11. °C 12. etc. 13. P.S. 14. U.N.
15. M.P. 16. B.S. 17. p.m. 18. B.C. 19. RN
20. Ph.D. 21. TB 22. TV 23. R.S.V.P. 24. IQ
25. M.D. 26. IOU 27. M.A. 28. POW 29. EST
30. C.O.D. 31. AC 32. hp 33. rpm 34. KCMP

IGNORANCE RESPONDERS:

I don't know

I'm not sure

Note: Variation in the use of periods and capitalization in abbreviations is frequent and widespread (as p.m., P.M., or PM)

TALKING ABOUT OTHER PEOPLE

Levels 2-4, class and small groups, speaking and writing

AGREEMENT:

I'll say

That's for sure

You can say that
again

When people label someone as being a certain type of person, sometimes you agree, sometimes you don't. On the next page you will find a number of ways of categorizing people.

Go over the list with your instructor, and first try to guess at the meaning of any expressions you don't know, e.g. "Is a sugar daddy someone who likes sugar?"

DISAGREEMENT:

Are you kidding?

That's ridiculous

Aw, come on!

What do you mean
a ...?

What!

After you have gone over the meaning of the gambits and their applicability, practice using them in small groups. Student A, talking to student B, invents something nice or nasty about someone in the class. (Pretend that person is not present.) Student B agrees or disagrees, using the gambits to the left and continuing with a reason.

Example

Student A: "I think George is a real nut case."

Student B: "I'll say, I saw him walking down the street talking to himself."

CLASSIFYING PEOPLE

HABITS

a chain smoker
a nail biter
a gum chewer
a blabbermouth
a no-good bum
a lousy cook

DRIVING STYLE

a reckless driver
a cautious driver
a backseat driver
a defensive driver
a tailgater
a Sunday driver
a lane hopper
a fender bender

HOBBIES

a sports buff
a hockey fan
an avid gardener
a do-it-yourselfer
a shutter bug (a camera fan)
a sharp dresser
a gourmet cook
an art freak
a film buff
a stamp collector
a coin collector
a health food nut
a book worm

ATTITUDES

a women's libber
a male chauvinist
a bleeding heart
a worry wart
a soft-touch
a red neck
a nut case
a weirdo
a party-pooper (a spoilsport)

SEX RELATIONSHIPS

a clinging vine
a super stud
a dirty old man
the jealous type
an old maid
a sugar daddy
a floozy
a ladies' man

SLEEPING HABITS

an early bird
a late riser
a light sleeper
a night owl
a sleep walker

WORKING STYLE

a hard worker
a born leader
a slave driver
a wheeler-dealer
a brown noser
an apple polisher
a budding journalist
a mad scientist
a jack-of-all trades
a workhorse
a goof-off
a perfectionist
a fuss-budget

If necessary, consult the definitions in the *Dictionary of American Slang* (2nd ed.), by Wentworth & Flexner. New York: T.Y. Crowell, 1975.

CROWD REACTIONS

Levels 3-4, class, speaking, 15 minutes

AGREEMENT:

That's for sure

You said it

Right on!

Hear! Hear!

You're darn right

As someone talks, we usually like to show whether we agree or disagree, especially when the topic is controversial.

For this exercise, the class remains in one large, rabble-rousing group. The students write down complaints and rallying calls about one of the topics below. After this is completed, a volunteer stands up 'at the meeting' and, with as much force as possible, makes a complaint backed up by further rallying calls.

DISAGREEMENT:

Not true

No way!

Come on

Don't give us that

Get serious

Down with ...

Everyone else reacts with agreement or disagreement responders.

CONTROVERSIAL TOPICS

1. School cafeteria food
2. School facilities
3. Testing procedures
4. Parking regulations
5. Abolishing TV commercials
6. Triple pay for overtime
7. Hockey is the roller-derby on ice
8. A woman's place is in the kitchen
9. Canadian immigration policy is unfair
10. The little man pays all the taxes

GETTING TO KNOW SOMEONE

Levels 2-4, class, speaking, 15 minutes

When getting to know another person, we tend to seek out points we have in common with that person. In such a situation, the responders of this section are very useful.

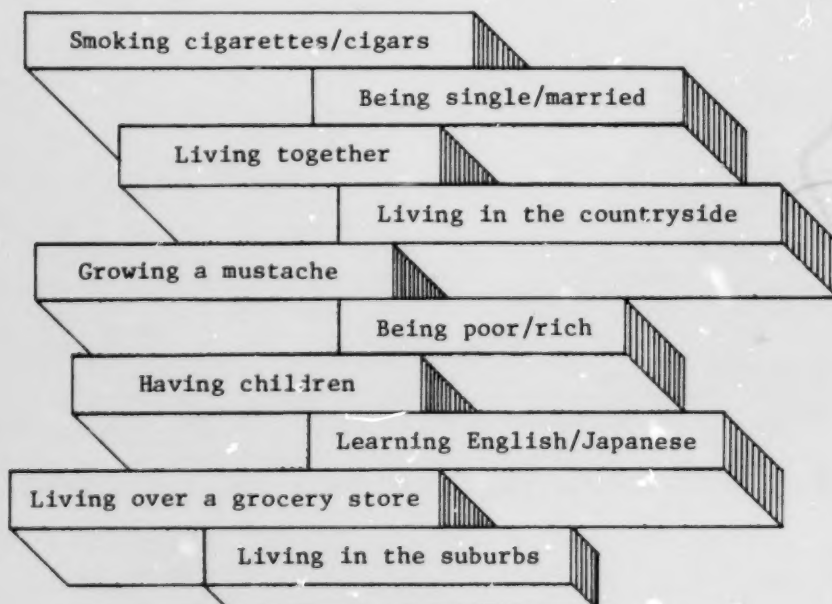
To practice these responders, try to think of advantages and disadvantages of the following situations. Then volunteer your idea to the class and find out if anyone agrees with you. They can choose responders from the list at the right to agree or disagree with you.

Example

"One advantage of being poor is that you don't have to worry about income tax."

"That's true".

SITUATIONS



AGREEMENT:

That's true

That's for sure

I agree with you there

Yeah, I know what you mean

DISAGREEMENT:

Yes, but don't you think ...

I agree with you but ...

I don't see it that way

Yeah, on the other hand ...

REACTING TO A LOVE TEST

Levels 2-4, class, speaking, game, 15 minutes

STRONG AGREEMENT:

Of course I would

I certainly would

Most likely I
would

Sure I would

MILD AGREEMENT:

I think I would

I think so

Probably I would

I might

I might con-
sider it

INDECISION:

I don't know
(if I would)

I can't decide

I can't make up
my mind

Are you a hopeless romantic, willing to fight any battle for your love? Or are you a dry realist who prides himself in accepting things as they are?

Choose someone in the class to be interviewed and someone to keep score. The remaining students take turns asking the questions on the opposite page; the interviewee responds with appropriate gambits which are scored. Paraphrase the questions if they are not understood.

When you are finished, you might want to choose a partner and repeat the interview twice. The first time, let your partner be the interviewee, and for the second time around, switch roles.

For an interpretation of the total score, see page 42.

SCORING

For even-numbered questions, score as follows:

Strong agreement	1
Mild agreement	2
Indecision	3
Mild disagreement	4
Strong disagreement	5

For odd-numbered questions, score as follows:

Strong agreement	5
Mild agreement	4
Indecision	3
Mild disagreement	2
Strong disagreement	1

QUESTIONS

1. *Suppose you already have a steady partner, would you ever be capable of falling in love with someone else?*

Score: ____

2. *Would you ever consider marrying someone whose background was not similar to yours?*

Score: ____

3. *Would you ever register your name with a computer dating firm?*

Score: ____

4. *Do you believe marriage should be a lifetime proposition?*

Score: ____

5. *Would you consider a childless marriage for yourself?*

Score: ____

6. *Would you turn down someone 'just acceptable' while waiting for the ideal love to come along?*

Score: ____

7. *Would you consider life still well worth living if you lost the one you loved?*

Score: ____

8. *Could you fall in love with someone who is not physically attractive to you?*

Score: ____

9. *Would you agree with someone who said, "Men are interested in women for only one reason"?*

Score: ____

10. *Suppose you could just barely make ends meet with your present income. Would you consider marrying someone with an equally limited income?*

Score: ____

Total Score: ____

(Interpretations, page 42)

MILD DISAGREEMENT:

Probably not

I don't think so

I doubt it

I don't quite see that

STRONG DISAGREEMENT:

No way

Never (in a million years)

Not on your life

Not even if you paid me

Not for all the money in the world

B. INDECISION AND IGNORANCE RESPONDERS

AN INDECISIVE SHOPPER

Levels 2-4, pairs, role-playing, 15 minutes

(I'm afraid) I
don't know

I don't know yet

I can't say yet

I can't decide

I can't make up
my mind

I'll have to think
it over

I'm really not sure

I'm not too sure

Sometimes we walk into a store, buy what we want and leave - no problem. At other times we are undecided, we look at an item, we check the price, we try it out, etc. If the salesclerk is present, we will probably want to employ some indecision responders.

Take turns acting the parts of an indecisive shopper and a salesclerk. After the initial exchange, the salesclerk explains how good an item is; the customer answers with one of the indecision responders adding a reason for the indecision.

INITIAL EXCHANGES

Salesclerks:

Can I help you sir/madam?

Are you being taken care of?

Would you like some assistance?

Shoppers:

I'd like to see some ...

Do you have any ...

No, thank you, I'm just looking.

PURCHASES TO BE UNDECIDED ABOUT

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. a wedding ring | 7. a fur coat |
| 2. a bottle of perfume | 8. a dress |
| 3. a TV set (colour or black-and-white?) | 9. a tie |
| 4. a car (large or small, two or four doors, which options?) | 10. a bedroom set (which style?) |
| 5. stereo equipment (can you afford the best?) | 11. wallpaper for the living room (which pattern and colour?) |
| 6. a vacation spot | 12. paint for the kitchen (which colour?) |
| | 13. your own purchase |

ADMITTING A LACK OF KNOWLEDGE

Levels 2-4, class, speaking, 20 minutes

Nobody likes to be at a loss for an answer. But every once in a while a question comes up that we simply can't answer. Sometimes the answer has slipped our minds and sometimes we never knew it in the first place.

Let's see how that might work out in practice. Take a few minutes to prepare three questions which you think would be challenging. When you're ready, ask a fellow student your questions. If this person doesn't know the answer, he will use one of the responders at the right and then suggest a person or a place where you might find the answer.

Example

"Who invented the game of basketball?"

"I'm afraid I don't know, but have you checked the encyclopedia?"

SOME SAMPLE QUESTIONS

1. Where were the Olympic summer games held in 1964?
2. Who was the first man on the moon?
3. What's the longest river in the world?
4. Your own question.

(Answers, page 42)

(I'm afraid) I don't
know

I'm sorry I don't know

I couldn't tell you

I'm not sure

It's slipped my mind

I don't remember

I forget

I can't remember

C. ACCEPTING AND REJECTING RESPONDERS

REACTING TO A HANDWRITING ANALYSIS

ACCEPTING:

I'm not surprised
That's me
I knew it
I thought so
Right on!
That's probably right

Levels 2-4, small groups, speaking, 40 minutes

Having your handwriting analyzed may reveal certain interesting facets of your personality. Whether you believe in handwriting analysis or not, it can be great fun. In this activity, you can find out for yourself whether an analysis of your handwriting reveals anything new about your character or merely confirms what you know anyway. Take an unruled sheet of paper. Write, in the handwriting that is most comfortable for you, the following two sentences: *I'm sure that he'll go swimming today. Tomorrow it'll be too cold for swimming, and then he'll have to go fishing.* Work in small groups with one person acting as the handwriting 'expert'.

REJECTING:

You're kidding
I don't believe it
No, definitely not
Are you pulling my leg?
Aw, come on!
That doesn't fit
I don't think so
I don't think that's fair

TEST 1

Hold a ruler below the written lines. Are all the words on the line, like this?

a. *All the words are on the line.*

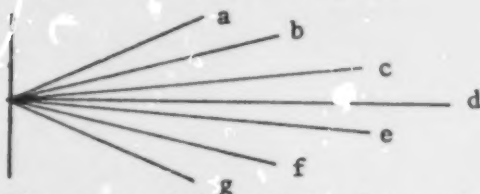
or do they go up and down, like this?

b. *The words go up and down.*

The expert decides whether the handwriting matches 1a or 1b, writes it down, reads the interpretation from page 16, and records it. Each subject accepts or rejects the analysis making use of a gambit. Now, go on to Test 2.

TEST 2

Draw a line below a few words in the middle of the sample. Does it go up or down on the page? Estimate which of the lines below corresponds best to your partner's slant of writing.

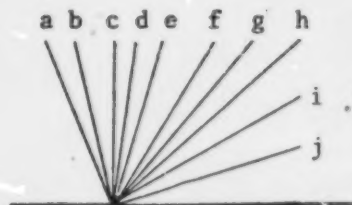


This is the slant of writing

The expert interprets and records the results. The subject responds with a gambit.. Continue in this manner for each test.

TEST 3

Does the handwriting slope to the right, to the left, or is it in-between?



This is the slope

TEST 4

Which is the set of parallel lines that fits the small letters?

a.

d.

b.

e.

c.

f.

Set c. fits this writing

Continue on the next page.

TEST 5

Is there little, some or much space between the lines?

ACCEPTING:

I'm not surprised

That's me

I knew it

I thought so

Right on!

That's probably
right

a. *There's
little space
between the
lines here.*

b. *There's
some space
between the
lines here.*

c. *There's
much space
between the
lines here.*

TEST 6

Check if the letters are usually connected, sometimes disconnected, or usually disconnected.

a. *connected*

b. *sometimes
disconnected*

c. *disconnected*

TEST 7

Look at the m's in 'swimming':

a. pointed *mmmm*

c. arcades *mmmm*

b. garlands *mmmm*

d. thready *mmmm*

REJECTING:

You're kidding

I don't believe
it

No, definitely
not

Are you pulling
my leg?

Aw, come on!

That doesn't fit

I don't think so

I don't think
that's fair

TEST 8

Check how even-sized the letters are:

a. varying size

swimming

b. same size throughout

swimming

c. tapering size

swimming

TEST 9

Look at the letter 'e' when it comes at the end of a word.
What does it generally look like?

a. long *have*

e. curling *have*

i. final *have*

b. short *have*

f. ascending *have*

j. final *have*

c. no *have*

g. descending *have*

k. short, curving final *have*

d. rising *have*

h. dropping *have*

l. lasso *have*

final *have*

final *have*

final *have*

TEST 10

Check if the letters 'o' and 'a' are usually open or closed.

- a. *They're usually open at the top.*
- b. *They're sometimes closed at the top.*
- c. *They're usually closed at the top.*

TEST 11

Find out how the i's are dotted most of the time.

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| a. dot right over <i>i</i> | f. wavy dot <i>i</i> |
| b. dot high <i>i</i> | g. dot flying to the left <i>i</i> |
| c. dot flying to the right <i>i</i> | h. hook dot <i>i</i> |
| d. circle dot <i>i</i> | i. dash dot <i>i</i> |
| e. thick dot <i>i</i> | j. no dot <i>i</i> |

TEST 12

Compare how the t's are crossed in most cases.

- | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| a. bar to the right <i>t</i> | f. looped bar <i>t</i> |
| b. bar to the left <i>t</i> | g. down-slant bar <i>t</i> |
| c. bar centered <i>t</i> | h. up-slant bar, high <i>t</i> |
| d. bar high left <i>t</i> | i. heavy bar <i>t</i> |
| e. star cross <i>t</i> | j. bar missing <i>t</i> |

INTERPRETATION OF HANDWRITING ANALYSIS

ACCEPTING:

I'm not surprised

That's me

I knew it

I thought so

Right on!

That's probably
right

REJECTING:

You're kidding

I don't believe it

No, definitely not

Are you pulling my
leg?

Aw, come on!

That doesn't fit

I don't think so

I don't think
that's fair

- 1a: straightforward, dependable, systematic
 1b: unsystematic, carefree, versatile
 2a: exuberant, very ambitious, restless
 2b: ambitious, optimistic (sometimes temporarily)
 2c: firm, confident
 2d: no special characteristics indicated
 2e: passive, unhappy (sometimes temporarily)
 2f: gloomy, pessimistic
 2g: very unhappy, despondent
 3a or b: self-conscious, ego-centered, analytic
 3c: emotionless, reserved
 3d or e: no special characteristics indicated
 3f, g, or h: generous, spontaneous, friendly
 3i or j: eager, impulsive
 4a or b: intellectual, rational, unassertive
 4c: no special characteristics indicated
 4d, e, or f: generous, restless, somewhat inattentive, assertive
 5a: confused, unclear
 5b: clear, organized
 5c: good at organization, generous
 6a: logical, adaptable
 6b: mixed rational-intuitive
 6c: meticulous, unadaptable, somewhat impractical
 7a: energetic, competitive
 together with 1b, and 2c, and 4a or b*: eccentric
 together with 2b: enthusiastic
 together with 3c, and 4a or b, and 5c, and 6a: discerning, careful
 together with 3f, g, or h: lively
 together with 5c, and 6b: wise
 7b: adaptable, receptive to new ideas, pleasure-loving
 together with 2b*: enthusiastic
 7c: reserved, strong-willed
 together with 1b, and 2e, and 3c*: careless
 7d: intelligent, creative
 together with 1b, and 4a or b*: creative
 together with 1b, and 2c, and 4a or b: eccentric

*In combinations, all noted elements must be present.

7a: changeable	11a: meticulous, precise
together with 1b, and 4a or b: versatile	together with 8b: very conscientious
8b: conscientious	11b: imaginative, enthusiastic
together with 1a: honest	11c: impulsive, intuitive
8c: tactful, discreet	11d: having artistic interests, sometimes demanding attention
9a: self-confident	11e: aggressive, materialistic
9b: reserved	11f: humorous
9c: self-centered	11g: hesitant, cautious
9d: interested in musical matters	11h: witty, perceptive
9e: protective, sensitive	11i: impatient
9f: friendly	together with 4a or b: fussy
9g: timid, shy	11j: absent-minded, careless
9h: passive	12a: impulsive, quick, lively
9i or j: tenacious, stubborn	12b: procrastinating
together with 1b, and 7a, and 8a: sly	together with 9a: indecisive
together with 3c: interested in possessions	12c: controlled, careful
together with 4a or b: petty	together with 2c, and 7a or b, and 9f or i: very determined
9k: fun-loving	together with 1a, and 9a or f: independent
9l: critical	12d: insecure
10a: frank, outspoken	12e: very sensitive
10b: sincere	12f: persistent
together with 1a, and 8b: frank, outspoken	12g: opinionated, critical
10c: secretive	12h: ambitious
together with 4a or b, and 5c, and 7a: critical	12i: strong-willed
	together with 2c, and 7a or b, and 9f or i: very determined
	together with 3c: arrogant
	together with 7a: aggressive
	12j: careless, absent-minded

CAUTION: Even the best handwriting analysis cannot fully describe a person's character. One study, for instance, showed a maximum accuracy of only 75%. It is therefore best not to take this game too seriously.

REFERENCE: If you're interested in learning more about handwriting analysis, see the paperback *Handwriting Analysis*, by Dorothy Sara. New York: Pyramid Books, 1956.

D. DISBELIEF AND CONSENSUS RESPONDERS

REACTING TO AN INKBLOT INTERPRETATION

Levels 2-4, pairs, speaking, 20 minutes

DISBELIEF:

Really?

Are you kidding?

Oh?

Aw, come on!

Is that right?

Where? Show me

I don't see it

What do you see in these inkblots? Some people see people, animals, faces or trees. Some others can't see anything at all.

Break into pairs and tell each other what you can see. If you can't see anything at all, relax, squint your eyes, and let your imagination go free.

Your partner will react to your interpretation with one of the gambits at the left, and then will tell you what he or she saw in the inkblot.

Finally, report back to the class the most unusual interpretations to see how others in the class react.

CONSENSUS:

Me too

So do I

That's what I
thought too

That's what I
was going to say!

I agree

That's right

Examples

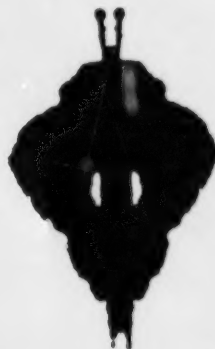
"Maria said she saw two horses laughing at each other in the seventh inkblot."

"That's what I thought too!"

or

"I see a cat looking through the bushes."

"Really?"



1.



2.

DISBELIEF AND CONSENSUS RESPONDERS



3.



4.



5.



6.



7.



8.

E. SYMPATHY AND LACK OF SYMPATHY RESPONDERS

REACTING TO UNFORTUNATE OR SAD EVENTS

UNFORTUNATE
EVENT:*Levels 2-4, class, writing and speaking, 15 minutes*

Oh no

That's too bad

What a pity

What a shame

What a nuisance

Poor you

Oh dear

The sympathy responders in this section are separated depending on the kind of event you respond to. It is unlikely, for example, that you would use the same responder for a story about a furnace breaking down on the coldest weekend of the winter ("What a nuisance") as you would for a story about an outbreak of cholera in India ("How awful!").

From the cue words, write out sentences about sad or unfortunate events. Take turns reading these, with other students responding using appropriate gambits.

SAD (DISASTROUS)
EVENT:

(Note: Some verbs may need to be in passive voice.)

How awful

How terrible

That must have been
awfulI'm sorry to hear
that

That's too bad

Oh, my God

1. One of my best friends ... sprained ... ankle ... first day ... holiday.
2. A friend of mine ... had ... dollars ... lifted ... jacket pocket.
3. ... uncle ... passed away ... recently.
4. Someone I know at work ... told ... diabetic.
5. My fiancée ... bike stolen ... storage room ... high-rise apartment building.
6. Somebody ... ripped off ... car radio ... tape deck ... broad daylight.
7. Several hundred people ... killed ... yesterday's earthquake.
8. Somebody pinched ... wallet ... all my identification papers.
9. A colleague ... laid off ... 15 years ... work ... same company.
10. My chauffeur ... sick with bad cold ... can't drive ... horse races
11. My sister ... bumped ... mouth ... car door ... broke ... tooth.
12. My friend ... car ... broke down ... way to work.

REACTING TO DESERVED MISFORTUNE

Levels 3-4, class, speaking, 15 minutes

Sometimes, when you think a person should have been able to predict trouble and avoid it, you may not feel that sympathy is deserved. Think of the last time you had a hair-raising ride with a friend who is always speeding. When the police car pulls you and your friend over to the side of the road you're likely to feel that he has gotten what he deserves. You may not feel sympathy for him at all.

In this activity, describe a personal habit or a habit of a friend or relative and indicate the consequences of this habit. (The consequences should not be too serious or the listener will want to sympathize). A classmate should then react to the story, using the gambits on this page.

(Note: Since the purpose of these gambits is to chastise, to criticize and to correct, they are all potentially offensive and should be used with care.)

1. Misfortune: lost license
Background: likes fast cars and high speeds;
ignores warnings
2. Misfortune: has terrific hangover
Background: went to wild party; had too much scotch;
then too much coffee; no sleep all night
3. Misfortune: lost a good job opportunity
Background: hates filing things away; papers in a mess;
can't find diploma

SOME OTHER MISFORTUNES

1. Slept through a test
2. Somebody picked your pocket
3. Got evicted from apartment
4. Lost money gambling (cards, the races, dice, roulette, etc.)

It's your own
fault

Someday you'll
learn

That'll teach you

Serves you right

What did you
expect?

F. HESITATION RESPONDERS

THE JOB INTERVIEW

Levels 3-4, small groups or pairs, speaking, 20 minutes

At times we may use a gambit to "buy time" - to give us a few seconds to formulate or to organize our thoughts. There are a number of gambits which are useful for this purpose.

I'll have to think
about that

Well, let's see
(now)

Where should I start

Well, let me think

That's a good
question

How shall I put it?

Let's put it
this way

What I would say
is ...

The best way I can
answer that is ...

In this activity you will practice hesitation responders with a well known situation: the job interview. An interview board consisting of two or three students should make a list of the most difficult questions they were asked in their last interviews. See opposite page for some sample questions. After the board has formulated a list of questions, they may call in an applicant for an interview. The applicant answers the questions using the gambits to the left.

SOME SAMPLE QUESTIONS FROM ACTUAL JOB INTERVIEWS

CONCERNING THE FORMER JOB

1. Take the worst problem you ran into on your last job and tell us how you handled it.
2. Explain what you did to get promoted the last time.
3. Why are you interested in leaving your present job?
4. Describe the work you're most proud of.

CONCERNING YOUR QUALIFICATIONS AND APTITUDES

5. Why do you feel you're qualified for this position?
6. Do you feel your background is fully adequate for the position you're applying for?
7. Do you feel you can deal with different types of people?

CONCERNING VARIOUS WORK SITUATIONS

8. What kind of person would you like to work for?
9. Suppose you're working in a team, and assume that you're in disagreement with the rest of the team about an important issue, what would you do?
10. Supposing that for good reasons you're unable to meet the deadline for a project. Your supervisor reports to his superiors that you are a 'slow worker'. How would you respond to this situation?
11. Suppose you have an employee who is consistently late but whose work is satisfactory. What would you do?

CONCERNING YOUR PLANS AND PRIVATE LIFE

12. What do you plan to be doing two and ten years from now?
13. Are you planning to settle down?
14. Why do you really want this job?
15. How does this job fit into your career plans?

G. ENCOURAGEMENT RESPONDERS

SHOWING INTEREST

Levels 2-4, pairs, speaking, 20 minutes

Right

Okay

Yeah

Yes?

And?

Well?

Really?

And then?

And so?

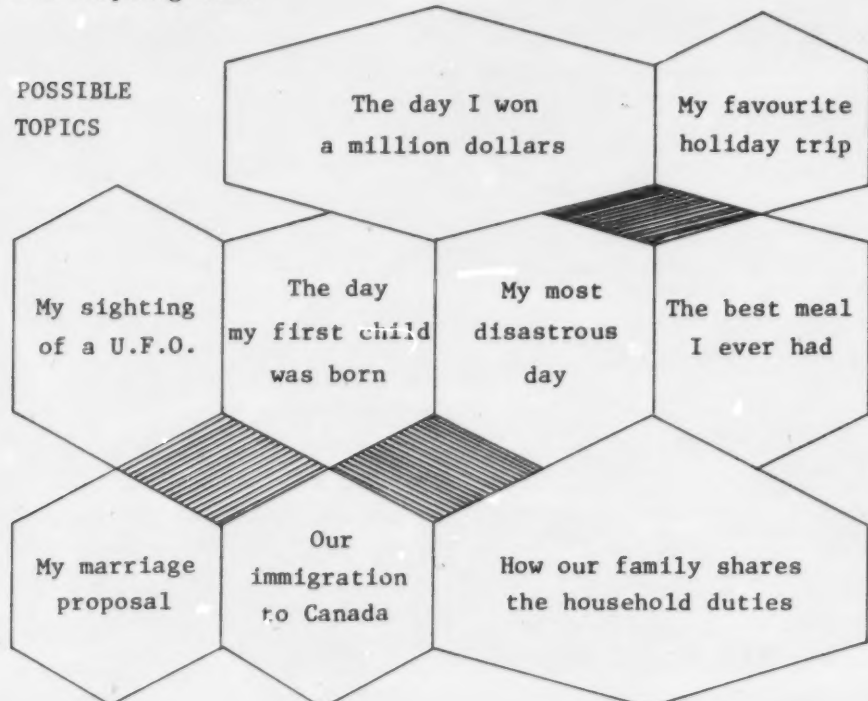
Uh-huh

As we listen to others speak, we often want to show them how interested we are in their conversation. We can do this by means of facial expressions, by nodding our head, and by using short encouragement responders.

In this activity, break into pairs. As one student describes an exciting or amusing event in his life, the other student responds with appropriate gambits and body language.

The encouragement responders are actually used while the speaker is telling the story without really interrupting him.

POSSIBLE TOPICS



H. INCOMPREHENSION RESPONDERS AND CROSS-CHECK GAMBITS

ASKING FOR REPETITION

Levels 2-4. small groups, speaking 10 minutes

There are few things as frustrating as a failure to understand something, and in a second language you will encounter this problem more frequently than in your mother tongue. Fortunately, most people will be glad to repeat something for you if you indicate to them that you haven't understood.

In this exercise we will use background noise to simulate a life-like situation. Play a tape (in the student's language when possible) as a distraction. A volunteer will give commands and ask questions in a low voice, and the others will try to understand what is being said. If they can't, they should interrupt the volunteer using the responders from the list at the right. If they do understand, they should act out the command or answer the question.

SAMPLE COMMANDS AND QUESTIONS

1. Stand up, turn around, and look over your left shoulder.
2. Open your book to page 50.
3. Pick up your pencil and draw a big number 8 in the air.
4. What is your telephone number at work?
5. Would you mind telling me your middle name?
6. What's the date today?

Pardon me?

(I) beg your pardon?

What was that?

(Could you) say
that again?

Would you repeat
that, please?

Would you mind
repeating that?

Sorry?

MISSING OUT ON PARTS OF A PROBLEM

Levels 3-4, groups, listening and speaking, 30 minutes

INCOMPREHENSION
RESPONDERS:

Would you mind
repeating that?

I didn't catch
that last part

You lost me there

Sorry, I don't
follow you

I'm not sure I'm
following you

What is that again?

I didn't get that

I'm lost

Sometimes we miss out on small portions of lectures or directions. In all but the most formal situations, it is perfectly acceptable to ask the speaker to repeat the part we missed, as long as we don't do that too often. Also, while explaining something difficult, speakers often use cross-check gambits to find out if everybody is following the explanation. Through this interplay of incomprehension responders and cross-check gambits, we make sure that even difficult messages are correctly transmitted from speaker to listener.

For this activity, listen very carefully to your teacher who will read the problems below, using cross-check gambits whenever appropriate. You should try to work out the solutions to these problems without looking at the page. If you miss out on part of the problem, you should use an appropriate responder from this section to ask the teacher to repeat the part you did not understand. When the problem has been understood by everyone, try to find the solution. You may work together with other students.

PROBLEMS

1. Start with 5, multiply that by 4, divide that by 2, square the result, and take half of that. What do you get?

2. If you write with your left hand, but draw with the opposite hand, and kick a ball with the foot on the same side, yet put your phone to the ear on the other side, which is also the side on which you are more short-sighted, which eye is less short-sighted?
3. Suppose that you're a pensioner living on a fixed income of \$500 a month, and that you're living in a country with a steady annual inflation of 10%. After a year, the buying power of your monthly \$500 will be reduced to \$450 (\$500, minus 10% of that which is \$50, equals \$450). If you have to live on the same fixed income and with the same annual inflation rate for another ten years after that, about how much buying power will be left of your \$500? (Remember to subtract 10% each year from the remaining amount. If you don't have the time to figure it out in detail, try to guess and see who in your group comes closest to the correct result.)
4. Assume you have a tower made up of four building blocks: at the bottom there is a cube, then there is an octahedron (eight-faced solid), on top of which there is a cylinder, and at the very top there is a pyramid. Now suppose you put the cylinder underneath the octahedron. Then you put the cube below the pyramid. Then you put the octahedron at the bottom of the whole pile. What is the sequence of building blocks now?

CROSS-CHECK GAMBITS:

Are you following me?

(Are) you with me?

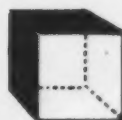
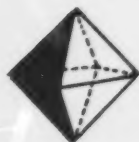
Is that clear?

Okay so far?

(Do) you understand so far?

Got it?

Right?



(Answers, page 42)

ASKING SOMEONE TO REPEAT SOMETHING ON THE PHONE

Levels 2-4, pairs, speaking, role-playing, 30 minutes

Sorry, what did
you say?

Pardon?

I didn't catch
the part about

I'm sorry, I didn't
understand that

Do you mind re-
peating that?

Can you repeat
that for me,
please?

What was that
again?

Sorry?

I didn't get the
part about ...

For a number of reasons it is particularly easy to misunderstand someone on the phone. The sound quality of the voice is changed, we can't see the speaker's face and hand gestures, and many of us have to use the phone in noisy surroundings. When we use the phone, it is especially important to make sure, by means of these gambits, that the message is transmitted accurately.

Telephone receptionists on emergency posts typically use the gambits of this section to make sure the message has been understood correctly. Practice an emergency call with a partner you select. Ask your partner to call you up about one of the situations described below. You, the telephone receptionist, should try to get the information indicated below each description. Remember that your caller may be a bit upset because of the psychological shock of these situations. So try to be patient and understanding, as well as efficient. (Use a teletrainer if possible.)

EMERGENCY SITUATIONS

1. FIRE DEPARTMENT: This is an emergency. There is a fire on the sixth floor of a large apartment building (apartment 609, 25 Sussex Drive). Clouds are billowing out of the windows of the apartment and smoke is filling the halls.

(Get the address and apartment number, type of building, and the name and address of the caller. Find out if he can see flames. Tell him to ring the fire alarm and make sure to use the stairs, not the elevators. Tell him the fire trucks will get there soon.)

2. POLICE STATION: There's a fight in a bar at 313 King Street between a big, fat fellow with enormous muscles and a short, stocky guy who looks like a prizefighter. They're using knives and the big, fat fellow is bleeding from the chest.

(Get the address of the bar, a description of the fighters, and the name and address of the caller. Tell him that a cruiser is on the way.)

3. HUMANE SOCIETY: The caller found a boa constrictor in the bathtub as he was attempting to take his morning shower. The snake did not move, and the caller had the presence of mind to close both the window and the bathroom door. He lives at 1040 Farnham Crescent.

(Get the name and address of the caller. Tell him to put the lid down on the toilet seat, keep the bathroom door shut, and that a snake specialist will be sent out right away.)

4. HOSPITAL EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT: The caller's wife is having a heart attack. She is feeling severe pain in her chest and left arm, is perspiring profusely, is short of breath, and has a very weak pulse. The couple lives in apartment 3D, at 904 Searle Avenue.

(Get the address and tell the caller that an ambulance will be on the way immediately. Tell him to give his wife artificial respiration, to place her into a semi-upright sitting position, but not to move her too much.)

5. Think of an emergency situation that you've been involved in yourself, and act out the situation with a telephone receptionist.

ASKING FOR A RESTATEMENT

Levels 3-4, class, speaking, game, 20 minutes

Pardon me?

(I) beg your
pardon

What was that?

(Could you) say
that again?

Would you repeat
that, please?

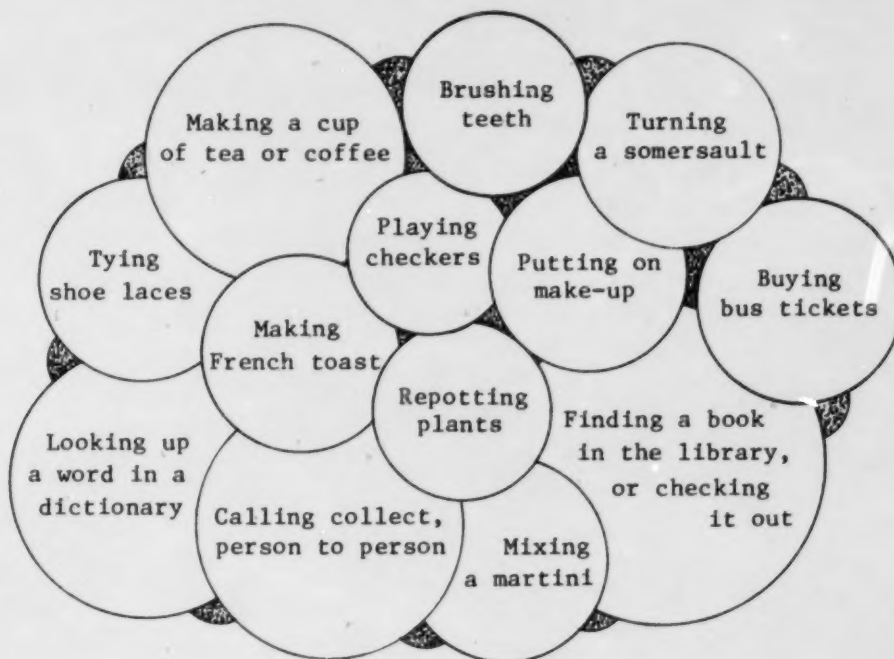
Would you mind
repeating that?

Sorry?

It is surprisingly difficult to describe common, everyday activities, and in many cases it is equally difficult to understand such descriptions. This activity provides practice in giving descriptions and in using cross-check gambits and incomprehension responders.

The teacher picks a simple activity (ideas below) and asks a student to describe it to the class. The student should use cross-check gambits (see page 27). Any fellow student may ask for a restatement.

SUGGESTED COMMON ACTIVITIES



COMPLIMENT RESPONDERS

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I. COMPLIMENT RESPONDERS

ACCEPTING COMPLIMENTS

Levels 2-4, pairs, speaking, 15 minutes

How are you at accepting compliments? Most people find it very hard to respond quietly and gracefully to being praised. In this category, usage varies greatly according to sex and social group.

In this activity, pay one of your fellow students a compliment. This student responds using a gambit from this section. So that there is no sudden stop in the conversation, which frequently happens in this kind of situation, the student who accepted the compliment should volunteer some additional information or maybe add a disclaimer.

Example

"I really like your dress, Louise".

"Oh, thank you. I bought it at that new boutique on Sussex Drive."

THINGS TO COMPLIMENT

- | | |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. A woman's dress | 6. A fancy tie |
| 2. A man's shirt | 7. A great talent for conversation |
| 3. A nice smile | 8. Elegant handwriting |
| 4. A good pronunciation in English | 9. A becoming haircut |
| 5. A new car | 10. Some other feature |

SOME POSSIBLE DISCLAIMERS

1. I've had this for years!
2. My X gave it to me.
3. I can't take all the credit for that.
4. I'm still trying to get used to it.

Oh, thank you

Oh, thanks

(How) kind of you
to say that

That's very kind
of you

Do you really
think so?

You've made
my day

Thanks, I needed
that

I'm flattered

Oh, I'm glad
you think so

That's nice to
hear

2. CLOSERS

Every conversation has to come to an end eventually. The reasons vary: sometimes you have to run off to do something else, and sometimes you've run out of things to say.

For each of these situations, there are some typical gambits. For instance, if you have said what you've wanted to say and would like to leave, you can say, I should be going. On the phone, you can convey the same message by saying, I'd better let you go. Anybody who is sensitive to these closing signals will take the hint and wish you goodbye in turn.

Which points out another good reason for becoming familiar with closers. If English is not your first language, you may miss the meaning of a closer altogether. Suppose that you're at a party, for instance, and you've just had a good chat. Now your conversational partner turns to you and says, "Well, I guess I'll try some of the cheese." What does he mean? He does want to go over to the cheese table and try some of the cheese, of course. But chances are that he would also like to meet and talk with a number of other guests. That is, after all, the purpose of a party.

The activities in this section give you an opportunity to practise some of the most common closing gambits in appropriate situations.

A. CASUAL CLOSERS

NO TIME TO TALK

Levels 2-4, pairs, speaking, role-playing, 20 minutes

In view of our rushed lifestyle, conversations must frequently come to an abrupt end. So it is not surprising that we have special gambits for such situations. These gambits are usually followed by a brief reason explaining why we have to leave and a closer like "Goodbye" or "See you".

Some situations involving such abrupt closings are sketched below. Choose a partner and act out each situation, using the gambits given here. After some practice, present your situation to the class.

SITUATION 1: You're passing through the cafeteria and you see someone you haven't seen for a while. You say hello, chat for some time, and then take leave with an appropriate gambit explaining that you have to go to class.

SITUATION 2: You're on your way to the bus stop and you run into a friend. You exchange a few sentences, but you soon excuse yourself with a gambit, because you see your bus coming around the corner.

SITUATION 3: Your typewriter has broken down and you're waiting for the repairman. He arrives the very moment you have to go off to a meeting. So you quickly explain to him that the 'q' and the 'z' keys stick, excuse yourself with a gambit, and then rush off.

OTHER INTERVENING EVENTS

an appointment with a doctor or a dentist
a store closing time
a deadline for getting a report in
a flight departure
a lunch date with someone special

Sorry, I've got to
go to

I have to run

I must be going

Could you excuse
me please?

Sorry to rush off

I hope you don't
mind but ...

SMALL-TALK CLOSERS

Levels 3-4, pairs, speaking, role playing, game, 20 minutes

(It's) been nice
talking to you

Oh, I've got to
see ...

HOST/HOSTESS:

I really should
circulate

We really must get
together sometime

Excuse me, I'd like
to try ...

Have you met ...

Well, nice meeting
you (again)

Give my regards
to ...

Excuse me, I'd like
to refill my glass

A large party is an opportunity to see many friends and acquaintances at one time. This means that often we can't spend a great deal of time with any one person without sacrificing our chance to renew other friendships. The gambits of this section provide the party-goer with freedom of movement since they are expressions for politely closing one conversation in order to move on to another.

THE COCKTAIL PARTY 'WALTZ'

For this activity, form two concentric circles. The inner circle are 'social butterflies' and the outer circle are 'wallflowers'. The teacher plays music as the two circles rotate in opposite directions. When the teacher stops the music, each 'butterfly' engages the nearest 'wallflower' in conversation. When the music starts again, the butterfly must close the conversation using an appropriate gambit from the list as the circles begin to rotate again. And so it goes!



PHONE CLOSERS

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B. PHONE CLOSERS

TELEPHONE CLOSERS

Levels 2-4, pairs, speaking, role-playing, 20 minutes

At the end of telephone conversations, closing gambits are especially useful. Because we can't read from the other persons' facial expressions how they feel about finishing the telephone calls, we have to depend on some of the verbal closing signals introduced here to bring the calls to a smooth end.

Practice having short telephone conversations (about 30-60 seconds long) in which you use some of these closers. Pretend that you are calling up a friend or colleague concerning one of the topics listed below. Towards the end of the conversation, the caller should use a closer to signal his wish to finish. The other speaker should then end the conversation with an appropriate responder.

TOPICS

1. Some good news about your job or your studies.
2. A new boy or girl friend.
3. Something you'd like to borrow
4. Some help with the homework assignments
5. An invitation to dinner
6. Something funny that happened yesterday
7. The (football, hockey, etc.) game of last night
8. Scheduling a meeting
9. Information about a job opening
10. Anything generally interesting that comes to your mind

CLOSERS FOR THE CALLER:

I'd better let
you go

Thanks for
your time

I think that about
wraps it up

I know you're busy,
so I'll let you go

It's been good
talking to you

CLOSERS FOR THE PERSON CALLED:

Well, thanks
for calling

Let me know if I
can be of any
further help

I'm afraid I don't
have time to talk
(plus reason)

I appreciate your
calling

C. FORMAL CLOSERS

A MEETING WITH THE BOSS

*Levels 2-4, pairs and class, speaking, role-playing,
20 minutes*

CLOSERS FOR
THE VISITOR:

Thank you for
your time

I really appreciate
your ...

I'd better not
take up any more
of your time

CLOSERS FOR THE
PERSON VISITED:

You're welcome

My pleasure

Right, O.K.

Best of luck to you

Let me know how
things work out

Keep me posted

When dealing with superiors or 'officialdom', we speak more politely and more formally than we do to friends. On such occasions, the closing gambits we use are naturally also more formal than the ones we use with our friends.

Here we re-enact a few situations that call for such closers. Choose a partner and go through one of the situations sketched out below. After five minutes, present your encounter to the class.

SITUATION 1: Go to see your boss about taking your annual leave. Go in, ask for some time, and sit down. Explain your plans and ask if you can take your leave in a specific time period. When the conversation is finished, both partners bow out with fitting closers.

SITUATION 2: Go to see your supervisor about leaving early due to an illness in the family. Explain the situation and after discussion, both partners end the conversation with closers.

OTHER POSSIBLE REASONS FOR VISITS:

1. To explain why you can't finish something on time.
2. To say that you are unhappy about something.
3. To change class.
4. To plan your 3-year study program.
5. To say that you have accepted another position.
6. To congratulate someone.
7. Your own reason.

PREPARING TO LEAVE

Levels 2-4, pairs, speaking, 10 minutes

We often indicate that we are thinking about leaving by saying something like "Well, I guess I should be going." This may mean that we really are about to leave, or it may mean that we want to check whether we are overstaying our welcome.

In this exercise, each student in the class 'visits' another student. After talking for a while, the visitor puts out a verbal feeler in the form of a closer, and the other student reacts with a 'Goodbye' or a 'Don't go' gambit depending on the situation and how he feels about continuing the conversation.

SITUATION

It's Friday afternoon and you and your friend have been chatting in your office for 10 minutes. Your friend says: "I guess I'd better let you get back to work." You answer: "Don't worry about that. I've pretty well finished my work for the week." or "Well, thanks for dropping in. Goodbye."

OTHER SITUATIONS

1. You've been at your friend's house for dinner and it's getting fairly late.
2. You met a friend at the grocery store and went to her place for a cup of tea.
3. You are visiting a friend who is in hospital.
4. You have been talking to your child's teacher at a parent-teacher meeting.

CLOSERS FOR
THE VISITOR:

I should be going

I guess I ought
to get back

Thank you for ...

Excuse me, but I
really must go

CLOSERS FOR THE
PERSON VISITED:

'DON'T GO'

Don't worry about
that

There's no need
to ...

Don't feel you
have to

Please stay

'GOODBYE'

We'll have to get
together again
sometime

Well, thanks for
dropping by

I hope we can get
together again

It's been nice ...

3. GRAND FINALE

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Every gambit has a specific purpose. You have learned gambits to use to agree or disagree, gambits to use to accept or reject someone else's ideas and gambits to use to show interest in what someone else is saying. In any complete conversation you will want to use a number of different types of gambits depending on what your conversational purposes are. The following activity allows you to choose the gambits you need as you come to different situations.

A SHOPPING TOUR

Levels 3-4, class, speaking, game, 20 minutes

For this activity a number of store managers, salesclerks, and officials are designated as well as two opposing teams of shopping families. Once the roles are assigned, all participants are given five minutes to think out, prepare, and discuss their roles, gambits, and specialized vocabulary. Then the families take turns throwing one dice in order to proceed through the city. The family that gets to the ice cream parlour first is the winner. All participants are expected to use a natural flow of gambits in all encounters.



4. ANSWERS

page 3 1. stop. 2. yield 3. school 4. square root 5. plus or minus
 6. is greater than 7. is divided by 8. is not equal to 9. to
 infinity 10. centimetre 11. degrees Celsius 12. et cetera
 13. post scriptum (Latin for post-script), or public school
 14. United Nations 15. Member of Parliament 16. Bachelor of
 Science 17. post meridiem (Latin for after noon) 18. before
 Christ, or British Columbia 19. Registered Nurse 20. Doctor
 of Philosophy 21. Tuberculosis 22. Television 23. répondez
 s'il vous plaît (French for please respond) 24. Intelligence
 Quotient 25. Medical Doctor 26. I owe you (some money)
 27. Master of Arts 28. Prisoner of War 29. Eastern Standard
 Time 30. cash on delivery 31. Alternating Current 32. horse
 power 33. revolutions per minute 34. Royal Canadian Mounted
 Police

page 9 Scores: 10 - 20 you're a hopeless romantic
 21 - 39 you have both romantic and realistic
 tendencies
 40 - 50 you're a dry realist

page 11 1. Tokyo 2. Neil Armstrong 3. The Amazon River

page 27 1. 50 2. the right eye 3. \$174.34. For a short cut, use
 the formula $FV = PV(1 - i)^n$, where FV = future value, PV = pres-
 ent value, i = rate of inflation in decimal form (i.e. 10% =
 0.1), and n = number of years: $\$500(1 - 0.1)^{10} = \$174.34$
 4. octahedron-cylinder-cube-pyramid